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AUTHOR Gladkowski, Gerald J.
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ABSTRACT

An alternate compensatory strategy for assisting persons from disadvantaged milieus is presented. A compilation of data from different areas to support consideration of the proposal is given. The proposal is such that it provides an opportunity to control and account for many of the factors that have previously confused and confounded compensatory program efforts designed to assist this segment of the populations, e.g. effect of the environment. The strategy recommended is based upon two premises: (a) placement of the child in a 24-hour-day residential center in infancy, and (b) opportunity for the parents to receive needed assistance. It is believed that in order to effect any significant changes one must intervene with a program that is intense and total. (CK)

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CONTROLLED INTERVENTION: AN ALTERNATE STRATEGY

BY

Dr. Gerald J. Gladkowski
The Pennsylvania State University

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present an alternate compensatory strategy for assisting persons from disadvantaged milieus, and it should be indicated that it is merely one alternative and is by no means intended to be a panacea, a plea for mass implementation, or a complete delineation of a program. What is presented is a compilation (or more accurately, summary) of data from different areas to support consideration of the proposal. The proposal is such that it provides an opportunity to control and account for many of the factors that have previously confused and confounded compensatory program efforts designed to assist this segment of the population, e.g., effect of the environment. That is, our previous efforts have generally done something with the child for a specified period of time during the day, but yet he is returned to the same familiar setting as before and therefore exposed to the same sources of influence. These influences are no doubt numerous and generally thought to counteract any positive effects the program may have had. Although there have been recent efforts to work jointly with the parents, child, and environmental setting, none have designed a total program for this group whereby control is maximized. The rationale for the proposal to follow is: If the environment is thought to affect the development of the child, and if this environment is fraught with many undesirable and uncontrolled characteristics, then something should be done to control and thereby minimize these factors.

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Background: There are a myriad of compensatory programs designed to assist children and/or families from impoverished milieus, with the evidence supporting their effectiveness being ambiguous. (For example, see McDill, et al., 1969; Cohen, 1970; Timpane, 1970) The many factors contributing to this "ambiguity" range from the political to the non-comparability of groups and can be divided into two rather general categories as follows: (1) the non-evaluational considerations (e.g., type of program, interactions of various socializing agencies), and (2) the experimental design or evaluational factors (e.g., assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups). An investigation of the various compensatory programs leads the author to conclude that there are simply too many variables interacting simultaneously thereby confounding both process and expected results, with an attempt at more precise delineation leading to inactive progression. The present state of affairs engenders a concern for alternate strategies, with the remainder of this paper being directed at presenting and supporting one such alternative for consideration.

Alternate Strategy: The particular strategy recommended is based upon two premises. First, the program should involve the implementation of residential human development centers where:

1. The child is placed in a twenty-four-hour-a-day residential center in infancy (or a very early age) and is thus provided with an opportunity for assistance in an environment which is relatively free of the pressures and tensions which exist in his usual social and family life, and which make difficult (or impossible) an accurate evaluation of all the factors that contribute to his development.
2. An opportunity is provided for the parents to simultaneously receive the needed assistance in working through their difficulties, e.g., educational and/or vocational training, as care is being provided for their children.

The many advantages of employing a residential approach will not be expounded upon at length, but generally they revolve around the concept of "control." That is, by placing children in such centers it would be possible to exert considerably more control over the environmental contingencies and would thus minimize the heretofore uncontrolled sources of variance which have confounded previous efforts. (See McDill, et al., 1969) In this way it would be possible to minimize the many factors which serve as competing alternative hypotheses to the results obtained.

Second, an approach postulated by Campbell (1969) and Campbell and Erlebacher (1970) in which they recommend that future intervention programs adhere to the basic tenets of experimental research and closely approximate a "true" experimental design. (See Campbell and Stanley, 1966 for a more complete discussion) The "approximation" of experimental research would be possible in a controlled residential milieu because the environmental experiences would be an observable source of variance and not error variance, as in, say a Head Start Program. For example, at present we have no way of determining the precise effect of the environmental influences upon a child after he leaves a particular program at the end of the day. Does the time away from such a program counteract any possible positive effects the program may have had? If so, in what way? What effect does the environment have, e.g. peer and family groups? Although no definitive answers exist, questions such as these are important if we ever hope to effect any significant behavioral change.

The author contends that the strategy recommended would be a significant improvement - both evaluationally and programmatically - over previous efforts, although such a recommendation engenders at least the following critical questions.

What about the purported adverse effects of institutionalization upon the subsequent growth and development of children?

Wouldn't multiple mothering also have a deleterious effect?

Why remove the child from his milieu at an early age?

The data to counteract the above questions cannot be expounded upon in detail in this paper, however, a cursory account or summary is indicated. (See Gladkowski, 1971 for a more complete discussion) The order of presentation will include a discussion of: (1) A model and precedent. (2) Institutionalization, and (3) Early development.

Model and Precedent: There presently exists specialized institutions subsumed under the rubric "residential treatment centers" designed to assist various segments of the population, e.g., emotionally distrubed and retarded children. Despite the many differences existing between these centers (concerning their philosophies, origins, auspices, and type of child treated) they do possess much in common, with practically all of them evolving out of a need to assist the child for whom the various societal agencies, e.g., foster care, were unable to provide adequate assistance. (See Kaduschin, 1967 and Reid and Hagan, 1952 for more extensive descriptions of residential centers)

Rather than providing an extensive description of a residential center I will simply list the essential features which generally characterize these institutions:

1. They are relatively self contained units which provide for the child's total care, e.g., physical, educational, and psychological.

2. Various professionals (educators, social workers, medical personnel, psychologists, child care workers) work together in a concerned effort to assist the child and family.

3. They consider the parents an integral part of the program.

4. They provide assistance after a child has been released from residence.

5. They are interested in research and evaluation of their program.

6. They are heuristic concerning such concepts as modeling, reinforcement contingencies, early development, et cetera.

7. They view removal of the child from the family setting as conductive to, and in many cases necessary for, the ultimate goal of reuniting the pair at some future time.

8. They are concerned with the community, i.e., as a service organization responding to a need. In many cases they serve in an information giving and public relations capacity by attempting to assist the wider community in understanding the center's purposes, philosophy, and recent developments in child care.

As stated previously, a residential approach would afford much more control over the very important environmental influences and would appear conducive to the more precise delineation of relevant variables. That is, if the child is placed in a controlled milieu then many extraneous sources which have consistentally confounded our results will be minimized, e.g., inadequate diet and intellectual development. Complimenting this would be another important consideration, namely, that total, intense care be provided both the child and parent simultaneously. More specifically, the author recommends that we consider adopting the structural and organizational format of such centers, while altering the programmatic and philosophic dimensions as needed.

It should also be indicated that there exists a striking similarity between the above listed factors and what various personages in the field consider to be the essential components for programs designed to assist the impoversidhed. That is, the residential center concept already incorporates many of the recommendations made by concerned parties

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investigating the problem.

Institutionalization: Although a precedent and model for placing children in residential centers exists, at least passing mention should be made concerning the underlying rationale - institutionalization and multiple-mothering. Many persons undoubtedly believe that the concept of institutionalization is contrary to our society's valued belief that the intact family is crucial to our development, viz., it is only through such a unit that the future of society depends and whereas the author does not take issue with this belief, in practice, evidence exists to the contrary. (For example, see Kephart, 1961 and Kaduschin, 1967). In many cases the intact family does not exist, and in those instances where it does, many families are in need of assistance in order to maintain themselves. Sometimes it becomes necessary to adopt a tangential approach (separation) in order to reach a specified goal (reuniting at a future time with considerably improved opportunities for success).

A review of the studies conducted in this area indicate that many of the investigations were retrospective accounts, with very few approximating an experiment in the "true" sense. While it is difficult to delineate specific relevant variables due to the oftentimes conflicting results reported, certain characteristics appear throughout the literature, namely, the fact that many of the institutional environments were deprived along many dimensions (e.g., untrained personnel, high adult-child rations), and that maternal or consistent care similar to that normally provided by a mother was lacking. (See Provence and Lipton, 1962) The present author would agree that severe, consistent deprivation of any human being (in virtually any area of development) is likely to have an adverse effect upon him, but this does not answer the question of how much and to what extent? Also, what specific factors, either individually or in combination, contribute

to this deprivation? The author does not agree that institutionalization per se need be the cause of the adverse effects noted in the development of children, but, rather, a more realistic assessment would tend to indicate that it is due to a multiplicity of factors in combination that produce the results reported. For example, Yarrow (1961, p. 187), in interpreting the study of Spitz and others on the effects of the loss of a mother figure, noted that, "a substantial portion of the children in each study did not show severe reactions to separation. In Spitz's study of one-hundred and twenty-three infants separated from their mothers between six and eight months of age, severe reactions occurred in only nineteen cases." Others have voiced similar caution about reaching premature conclusions on the basis of the various studies, most notably, Stone (1954), Bijou and Baer (1965), Hilgard (1962), and Mussen, et al. (1963). The point being that we must caution ourselves against being deluded into thinking that the "evils" of institutions are inherent. The fact is, there is no reality existing outside of such milieus - what transpires in the direct consequence of the human interaction between employees and clients. As Berger and Luckmann (1967, p. 60) succinctly express it, "It is important to keep in mind that the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity." Another way of viewing such settings is to conceive of them as active independent variables and not assigned ones because we can change and modify institutions, we can organize them anyway we desire, staff them with any type of person we desire, and thus they are not given or immutable entities.

Despite the methodological weaknesses of the studies they do tend to indicate that being reared in a "deprived" institutional setting may have adverse effects upon subsequent development. The importance of this

fact is that "deprivation" is a manipulable independent variable and hence is not inherent in the institution per se, and therefore a residential center could be designed in which:

1. The child could have his mother to perform and provide the necessary "motherly" functions as well as having the assistance of highly qualified medical personnel.

2. The institution would not be "deprived" in any sense but in contrast could be stimulating, nurturant, and could correct for the weaknesses characterizing those institutions in which negative effects were noted, e.g., high adult-child ratios.

Additional support for the recommended strategy is derived from another variant of institutionalization, namely, the Israeli Kibbutzim.(I) In reviewing the studies of the Kubbutzim method of child rearing the author was unable to locate any noted adverse effects of this form of institutionalization. (Gladkowski 1971) The studies conducted in this area indicate that if the environment provided is highly nurturant and stimulating, the child should not suffer any adverse effects from such an experience, particularly when the biological and surrogate mothers are involved in the entire process. The fact is, the research conducted to date does not contraindicate an experimental undertaking of the nature recommended in this paper, and it would appear that various child-rearing approaches would add greatly to our understanding of the familial interactions involved in the growth and development process - for both advantaged and disadvantaged.

In summary, the important point is that the literature; (1) does not support the institution qua institution theory of negative

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1. The author is not concerned with the political and philosophical basis of the Kubbutz, but merely the child rearing process per se.

consequences, nor (2) the adverse effects of multiple-mothering.[1]

Early Development: There exists a plethora of data supporting the importance of early development, the environment, and the processes of modeling and/or reinforcement contingencies in early development, (For example, see Brofenbrenner, 1969), but rather than reiterating point after point along a multitude of dimensions, the author extracted and summarized what he considers to be the major factors as follows:

1. Intervention should be begun early in the child's life. For example, see Bloom, 1964; Hunt, 1961,1966,1969; Golden, et al., 1969; Deutsch, 1966; and Edwards, 1968.

2. The environment is a crucial factor of importance in both understanding and effecting change. For example, see Mathis, et al., 1970; Bloom, 1964; Boger and Ambron, 1969; and Scheinfeld, 1969.

3. Modeling and/or the reinforcement history of an individual is important in the learning process. For example, see Hilgard and Bower, 1966; Sarason, 1967; Bandura, 1967; Brofenbrenner, 1969; Spaulding, 1968; and Van Den Daele, 1969.

4. A clearly delineated strategy or approach, both evaluationally and programmatically, is preferred. For example, see Parker, et al., 1970; McDill, et al., 1969; Gray, 1969; and Gordon, 1969.

5. Longitudinal research is generally recommended over cross sectional research. For example, see Harvard Educational Review, Winter, 1968, and Bloom, 1964.

6. A residential approach may be necessary in order to effect any significant change along various dimensions. For example, see Bettleheim, 1969; Friedenberg, 1965; and Rabkin and Rabkin, 1969.

7. Any program designed to assist this target population should be a total program in every respect. For example, see Brofenbrenner, 1969; Gray, 1969; Gray and Klaus, 1969: Mathis, et al., 1970; Harvard Educational Review, Winter, 1968.

The effectiveness of intervention at an early age is supported by much (certainly not all) of the available data on behavioral change, and it would

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1. See Yarrow (1961 and 1964) for excellent reviews of the studies conducted on institutionalization.

appear that if a choice is possible between "prevention" and "treatment after the fact," the former is to be preferred. (See Deutsch, 1966 and Read, 1972). The author's bias leads him to believe that the most efficient manner in which to accomplish this is to employ the use of residential centers in which the entire family can be given assistance, with the children remaining in a twenty-four-hour-a-day human development center in which control over environmental influence is maximized. Hechinger (1966, p. 6) summarized the rationale underlying this reasoning when he stated that:

> The argument in favor of such education is virtually unanswerable: if deprivation starts to build up at an early age and progressively limits and eventually blocks entry into the mainstream of society, then an early start must be made to offset the lack of parental teaching, care, and mind molding.

Of all the varied attempts to assist the improverished none has adequately controlled the environment. No clear cut consensus exists concerning the specific significance or interpretation of the many factors influencing deprivation, despite the enormous amount of literature on the topic, except to indicate that the disadvantaged have a tendency to be deficient on many identifiable factors when compared to non-disadvantaged populations. Perhaps by beginning as early as possible with controlled, systematic, intervention, the various factors in a situation which promote change can more closely be controlled and identified, particularly when the possibility exists to approximate experimental research.

In addition to providing an environmental setting conductive to experimental research, total milieu intervention will also provide an atmosphere in which an effort can be made to offer the parents an <u>opportunity</u> to receive educational and/or vocational training, which, in turn, would offer the possibility of countering criticisms of previous program efforts

such as those made by Gordon (1969, p. 5) when he stated:

> Intervention to manipulate these factors to change housing, to change income, to change the sense of power, to do any of these has largely been ignored in university projects and by large school systems programs. Worse than that, researchers and appliers have recognized the existence of such factors and have chosen implicitly or explicitly not to deal with them.

Further, the program recommended would create the possibility of fusing two somewhat disparate contentions, namely, the importance of education for future success in society (See Harvard Educational Review Winter 1968) and the fact that many of the problems facing the schools are the result of factors over which the disadvantaged (and schools) have little control (See Mathis, et al., 1970, p. 740). The implication is obvious - the home environment contributes considerably to future success (See Coleman, et al., 1969; Jencks, 1966; and Brofenbrenner, 1969), and if accounts of this milieu are accurate then total intervention is not only supportable, but perhaps necessary.

Summary and Conclusion: The recommended alternative to the presently existing compensatory programs is one in which the children from impoverished milieus would be placed in twenty-four-hour-a-day residential centers at an early age (preferably infancy), while simultaneously assisting the parents, (if possible). In order to support the concept a cursory review of the following was presented: (1) A model and precedent based upon present day residential treatment centers in which it was recommended that we adopt and adapt the structural and organizational format while altering the philosophic and programmatic dimensions as needed. (2) An indication that a review of the literature on institutionalization and multiple-mothering does not contraindicate an experimental center, and (3) the importance of the environment and early development.

It is the author's contention that the concept posited would significantly improve upon both the evaluational and programmatic dimensions when compared with present day compensatory programs by virtue of the increased control over relevant variables. (See Gladkowski, 1971, Chapter Four for a more complete discussion and explanation).

Undoubtedly, the discussion and debates will continue regarding such matters as what specific strategy to employ to assist children and familites from impoverished milieus, whether or not the dimensional differences are attributable to heredity or environmental circumstances, and so forth, with many of the conclusions reached depending upon both the scientific and philosophic aspects of the problem. Unfortunately, there is no definitive and effective way in which to separate "what is" from "what ought to be," just as there is no way in which to decide the "best way" to do anything. Most everything is problematic, with the day of provisional certitudes being the most we can expect from fellow human beings in their attempt to cope with the grim realities of everyday existence. The author thus presented the data as he "sees it" realizing and acknowledging the fact that "one way of seeing inevitably involves a way of not seeing."

Perhaps we can stem the tide of evasive, insensate rhetoric leading to inactive progression long enough to assist those individuals in our society who urgently need our help. Friedenberg (1965, P. 253) expressed the sentiments of the author when he stated that:

> The first need of poor youth is to live better. It is rather stupid to discuss educational problems of youngsters who live in wretched homes with bad and irregular nutrition, no privacy and no place to study, in contact only with adults who are too exhausted and disturbed by the difficulties of their own lives and in homes that are often not so much broken as never intact in the first place.

It is believed that in order to effect any significant changes one must intervene with a program that is intense and total; one in which both child and parents are assisted simultaneously by various professionals and community personnel working together. A residential center is one viable alternative for consideration, particularly after the ambiguous results of present day compensatory efforts. It should also be indicated that the variants of the recommended strategy are numerous. For example, it would be possible to admit an entire family to controlled living environments in which maximum efforts could be expended in providing the necessary tools for survival in this increasingly complex society, and would appear to be a more effective way in which to change behavior, rather than the piece meal, token efforts of our present undertakings.

It is hoped that what has been presented will serve as a stimulus to further model building, eventually leading to the more precise delineation of an experimental model. Such a delineation would obviously require the expertise of individuals from different fields (e.g., medicine, psychology, and sociology) working over an extended period of time, and as was stated in the beginning of this paper this is not a plea for mass implementation but, instead, is simply an alternative for consideration. It is intended to be suggestive, not prescriptive, or as Siegel (1972, p. 15) stated:

> Now is not the time for the preschool field to accept <u>one</u> theoretical model of development or <u>one</u> type of program. It is time to discuss various models, devise programs consistent with them and evaluate the effort. From this an empirical base will emerge for program development.

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